



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

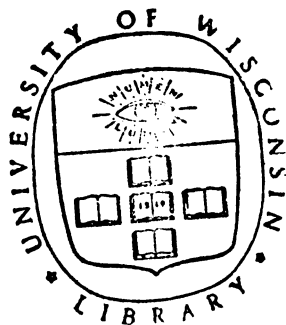
Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



An Exposition of The Litany

by

The Rt. Rev. A. C. A. Hall, D.D., LL.D.
Bishop of Vermont

Milwaukee :
The Young Churchman Co.

London :
A. R. Mowbray & Co.

1914

COPYRIGHT 1914
BY
THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.

272483

JAN -2 1924

CUEN

.H14

CONTENTS

	PAGE
PREFACE	vii
THE LITANY	ix
THE INVOCATION OF THE TRI-UNE GOD . .	1
THE DEPRECATION OF GOD'S WRATH . .	15
FOR DELIVERANCE FROM SPIRITUAL SINS	29
FROM CARNAL AND WORLDLY SINS . .	34
FROM EXTERNAL CALAMITIES . .	39
FROM CORPORATE AND SOCIAL EVILS	45
THE OBSECRATIONS	49
SUPPLICATIONS FOR CHRIST'S PEOPLE AT LARGE	61
FOR VARIOUS CLASSES ACCORDING TO THEIR SPIRITUAL NEEDS . . .	71
FOR VARIOUS CLASSES ACCORDING TO THEIR TEMPORAL NECESSITIES .	84
FOR ENEMIES, FOR THE FRUITS OF THE EARTH, FOR TRUE REPENTANCE	97
THE AGNUS DEI, KYRIES, AND OTHER PRAYERS	102
THE PRAYER OF ST. CHRYSOSTOM AND THE GRACE	108
NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE . . .	112

PREFACE

The Litany might well form a starting-point for lectures on dogmatic and moral theology. What is chiefly attempted in the following pages, with brief and simple but accurate treatment of doctrinal points, is instruction on Prayer,

to whom we pray,
for what, and for whom,

as we are guided by the Litany. The whole of the exposition was given in nine half-hour instructions at St. Paul's, Burlington, during the last Advent and Lenten seasons. The book might easily be used for reading to a congregation in a similar manner.

For convenience in this or in private use, a space is left marking sections with groups of petitions, though the book is not divided into chapters.

Though I am not conscious of having directly used his book save for the quotation on page 86, one could hardly, in putting out an exposition of the Litany, refrain from mentioning the *Commentary on the Litany*, by Bishop Alexander Forbes of Brechin (pub-

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LITANY

lished in 1855, and I am afraid now out of print), from which, as from other books of his, many of us in younger days learned much for faith and for devotion.

A. C. A. H.

Burlington, Vermont,
Easter-tide, 1914.

The Litany is a solemn form of entreaty, in which responses are a prominent feature. Such litanies were often sung in procession, particularly on occasions of penitence and special supplication. Our Litany is, with very slight alterations, the oldest part of the existing Prayer Book in the English language, having been put forth in 1544, translated and enlarged by Archbishop Cranmer from the earlier Latin forms. Several of Cranmer's additions seem to have been taken from Luther's Litany, as is the suffrage inserted in the American Prayer Book of 1892, "that it may please thee to send forth labourers into thy harvest."

THE Litany in the Prayer Book is taken as the starting point for these Spiritual Instructions, specially with a view to speaking about Prayer—what to pray about, for whom to pray, to whom we pray. Spiritual Instructions they are intended to be. So I shall only incidentally touch on the history of the Litany or its liturgical use. In the same way there must of necessity be a good deal of doctrine, both theological and moral; but this will be treated not in an abstract manner, but for its practical bearing.

The Litany begins with an invocation of each Person of the Trinity, and an address to the Trinity, that is, to God in His three-fold mode of being or existence. Then the greater part of the Litany is addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ; He is the “good Lord,” whom we ask to deliver us, whom we beseech to hear us. These two points at once suggest the question, to whom

AN EXPOSITION OF

should we pray? The answer is plain,—to God and God alone, the Supreme Being, the Source and the End of all life, Omnipresent, Omniscient, Infinite and Eternal; having all the powers that we have, but in higher perfection, in whose image our spiritual being is made,¹ a conscious, intelligent, self-determining, that is, a personal Being.

To such an one we pay supreme worship of entire self-oblation and self-surrender (this, remember, is a real element in all true prayer), and to such an one we present our petitions confident of His ability and readiness to hear and to answer our prayers. But this is neither a due nor a reasonable attitude towards any created being, however highly exalted; for instance, an archangel, chief among heavenly intelligences, or the blessed Virgin Mary, chief of saints, and the Mother according to His human nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God. They are fellow-members with us in God's

¹ Genesis i. 27.

THE LITANY

family, our elder brothers and sisters, with whom we have communion or fellowship of life and interests. The saints pray *for* us and *with* us, and we pray *with* and *for* them, as one body to our common God and Father; but we do not pray *to* them. Invocation in the sense of asking the Saints to *pray for us* may be defended, as we may ask one another's prayers on earth; only there is this difference, that we have no *ascertained* mode of communication with the departed, as we have with brethren who are still in the body. I do not say that there may not be such modes of communication. With the wonder of wireless messages about us, it would be a rash thing to say that we cannot communicate with disembodied spirits. But I do say that the matter being so uncertain, it is better and wiser to ask God that we may benefit by the prayers of His saints in heaven, as by those of His whole Church on earth. The practice of formal and stated prayers to the saints, offered on our knees and in connexion with prayers to God, is misleading and tends (as history shows, and by

AN EXPOSITION OF

this experience the Church should profit) to a confusion in the minds of ordinary people between prayers to God and such addresses to created beings. It was on this account that the invocations of Saints, which formerly had a place in the Litany, were omitted, and are altogether excluded from the Prayer Book and from the public worship of the reformed Church.

The greater part of the Litany (as has been said) is addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ. This is because He is God, the Second Person of the Trinity, and would not otherwise be defensible. Prayer is addressed to *a person*, not to a nature, still less to any part or organ of Christ's nature, like the Sacred Heart. We pray to our Lord because He is God; we may find it easier to pray to Him inasmuch as He is the Person of the Godhead who has become incarnate and drawn near to us, assuring us thereby of His sympathy and understanding. When we call upon Him by a human title, as "Son of man," or "Son of David," our prayer is directed to the divine Person, who bears the human title, as

THE LITANY

He wears the human nature. It is not that the Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, is *as such* easier of approach than the First Person, the Father, or more merciful and considerate; but that the Son is the Person of the Godhead who has taken and still wears our nature, and so is Emmanuel, God with us, now and ever as well as during the thirty years of His sojourn on earth.

One weighty objection to the invocation of Saints is that it tends to obscure the real position of our Lord Jesus Christ as the object of Christian prayer. The Christian religion knows of no secondary or created deities, nor worships any created being. This was the argument of Catholic theologians like Athanasius in the Arian controversy, against those who denied the true Godhead of our Lord. "You worship Jesus Christ, as did the apostles, and pray to Him,"—they said to the Arians. "Yes, but as a secondary deity," Arians in substance replied. "Of this the Christian religion knows nothing," said the Catholics. "The

AN EXPOSITION OF

Lord Jesus can only be worshipped by Christians on the ground that He is God, of one substance or inner being with the Father.” Had there been at that time any common practice of the invocation of the Saints, the Catholic argument would have been seriously lessened in force. The practice tends, however unintentionally, not only to an undue exaltation of the Saints, but to a degradation of our Lord Jesus Christ.²

² See Dr. Bright's *The Age of the Fathers*, vol. I, p. 74; and such passages as the following in the works of St. Athanasius translated in the *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. IV, pp. 157, 360, 361, 400, 575, 576. “We do not worship a creature. Far be the thought. For such an error belongs to heathens and Arians. But we worship the Lord of creation, Incarnate, the Word of God. For if the flesh also is in itself a part of the created world, yet it has become God's body. And we neither divide the body, being such, from the Word, and worship it by itself, nor when we worship the Word do we set Him far apart from the flesh, but knowing that the Word was made flesh, we recognize Him as God also, after having come in the flesh.” “Creature does not worship creature, but servant Lord, and creature God,” referring to Acts x. 26, and Rev. xxii. 9. For the worship paid to our Lord, see also Dr. Liddon's *Bampton Lectures*, pp. 385 sq. (16th ed.)

THE LITANY

Well then it is God, and God alone, to whom we pray, at any rate in the strict sense of the word. But, it is objected, we pray to each Person of the Trinity. Yes, but these are not separate Gods. The word "person" when applied to the Trinity does not mean so much as it means when we ordinarily use it of an individual man or woman. The term is used in reference to the Trinity for want of a better and more accurate term. Our language is confessedly inadequate for the full and exact expression of divine realities.* Two points about the Trinity I want to impress upon you. (a) One is this: We must always in thinking of the Trinity begin with the thought and realization of God's absolute and indivisible Oneness. It was not until this truth had been thoroughly impressed upon, hammered into, we might say, the mind of Israel by Old Testament teachers and prophets that God ventured to disclose

*I may refer to ch. III on "God the Tri-une Being," in my *Doctrine of the Church* (Sewanee Theological Library) for a fuller exposition of this, with references.

AN EXPOSITION OF

inner distinctions within the One divine Being, distinctions which for want of better terminology we speak of as "persons." We must begin with the Oneness and then recognize within that Oneness a Threeness. If we begin with the thought of the Three, and work back to the One, we shall almost certainly go wrong, and regard the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost as we think of three individual men sharing one common nature. But that would be three Gods, not One God existing in a threefold manner, and would be an idea altogether foreign to the Scriptural and Catholic doctrine of the Trinity. You may find this illustration helpful. Our own inner being (call it soul or spirit as you please) is indissolubly one. But within this one spiritual being—the "I" in us—we perceive a distinction of powers (memory, understanding and choice), each of which has its proper function on behalf of the whole person, while all work together as one; so that we can either say I remember, or my memory recalls; I think, or my understanding reasons; I choose, or my will de-

THE LITANY

cides. Even so God creates, or the Father ; God redeems, or the Son ; God sanctifies, or the Holy Ghost ; that is, we attribute these different operations of God to one or other of the Persons of the Trinity.

(b) Another way of regarding the Trinity, not expressing the whole truth, but that which perhaps it is most important for us at first to grasp, is to think of the Father as *God* simply, in His infinite being, absolutely spiritual, everywhere present, underlying all while above all, baffling our imagination and bewildering our understanding ; the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, is *God as man*, in our nature and amid our circumstances, acting out God's character (for this, He must be of one nature with the Father, the very same God), translating the divine perfections into language we can understand, the language of human conduct. The Holy Ghost is *God in men and women*, reproducing in us the character of our Father, which was acted out *before* us by our Lord. This is not denying or ignoring the fact that there are these three *eternal* distinctions in the

AN EXPOSITION OF

divine being, anterior to and independent of any relation to created life. The eternal and essential distinctions are back of the threefold manifestations and relations in which God stands to us.

Here it may be remarked that while the word *Trinity*^{*} is not Scriptural, that for which it stands is plainly taught in the New Testament, especially by our Lord Himself in His last discourse (St. John xiv-xvi), and implied in the apostolic writings. For instance, our Lord says, "I will pray the Father and he shall give you another Comforter or Helper, even the Spirit of truth, that he may abide with you for ever" (xv. 16); and "When the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me" (xvi. 26).

So we pray to *God the Father*, of or from Heaven (that is, our heavenly Father), the Source of all life and being, to

^{*}The word "*Trinity*" *τρίτας* is first found in Theophilus of Antioch, A. D. 180; *Trinitas* a little later in Tertullian.

THE LITANY

have mercy upon us in our feebleness, who are yet the work of His hands, and in our sin, having abused the gifts which He has bestowed, and transgressed His commandments which mark out the path of our peace and welfare. All our gifts, powers and organs are His creation to be used in obedience to His commandments, for His purposes. We appeal to His fatherly care for His children. We pray to *God the Son*, incarnate, our Redeemer or Deliverer, who took our nature, shouldered our burden, met our temptations, conquered our enemies, and so rescued us from bondage to sin and Satan; especially to pardon us for all our setting at naught of His example and teaching and our thwarting of His purposes; we pray that all that He has done and borne for us may not be in vain. We pray to Him as the Redeemer of the world, not of a select few only, nor of the white race. We must make this redemption and rescue known to all, and seek to have all restored since all have been redeemed. We pray to *God the Holy*

AN EXPOSITION OF

Ghost, our Sanctifier, who comes forth from the Father our Creator and the Son our Redeemer, to perfect the work of each; especially to pardon us for our neglect of His warnings and our failure to correspond with His inspirations and to make use of His grace and help. We pray that He would conform us to our Father's likeness after the example of our Elder Brother Jesus Christ. We ask mercy for marring creation, for frustrating redemption, for grieving and quenching the Spirit.

After our prayer to each Person of the Trinity, as if to guard against any misunderstanding or erroneous conception of the Three Persons as if they were three separate gods, we pray to the Trinity, "holy, blessed and glorious," that is, not only to the Three Persons in One God, but (this is perhaps in our day the more important thought) to the One God in three Persons, the One God existing in a threefold way, with a threefold distinction; not as a solitary individual or unit (in that case we could not think of God's nature as

THE LITANY

being essentially Love),⁵ but as having within Himself a certain social life, which constitutes His own blessedness. Into this communion or fellowship He would admit us—to be children of a heavenly Father, as members of His only-begotten Son, guided and inspired by His indwelling Spirit of love and truth and purity. So, as St. Peter says, we are made partakers of the divine nature.* The expression “miserable sinners,” with which each of these invocations ends, is sometimes objected to. We may doubt whether, if we were compiling the Litany afresh, we should put it in. I admit that (like the General Confession at daily Morning and Evening Prayer) it seems rather exaggerated in emphasis for constant use. But it is true!

O God the Father of Heaven; have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Son, Redeemer of the world; have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O God the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the

* I John iv. 8.

* II Pet. i. 4.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LITANY

Father and the Son; have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity, three Persons and one God; have mercy upon us miserable sinners.

THE Litany opens with *Invocations*, calling upon the Trinity (as we may say, individually and collectively); on these *Invocations* follow *Deprecations*, prayers addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ that we may be delivered *from* various kinds of evil; these in turn are followed by what are called *Obsecrations*, in which we plead *by* what our Lord has done and suffered for us. Then come *Supplications*, prayers *for* various classes of persons and *for* various gifts and blessings for ourselves and others.

The first two sentences among the *Deprecations*, beginning "Remember not, Lord, our offences" and "From all evil and mischief" will furnish more than sufficient matter for our consideration now. I do not propose to treat the words or clauses in their exact order; but rather to take the *leading thoughts* that are expressed in these prayers in what may be a natural connex-



AN EXPOSITION OF

ion or sequence, commenting briefly on each. What I should say we specially need here, as so commonly, is to free our minds from popular misconceptions, and to see religious truths in a reasonable light, and as they may be stated in harmony with the intelligence and conscience of today.

1. The first prominent thought, then, in these Deprecations is that of *God's Wrath*. "Take not vengeance of our sins"; "be not angry with us forever"; "from Thy wrath, good Lord, deliver us." So we are taught to pray.

God's wrath, it is a most solemn thought; more than that, it is an awful reality, a necessity, we may say, of His being. A perfectly holy Being must abhor and detest what is evil—what is contrary to His own nature and character, of truth and love and purity; what disturbs and violates the order He has established, and ruins the creatures He has made. God cannot close His eyes to evil round about, nor can He be indifferent to what He sees. As a conscious, intelligent, moral Person, He must approve or disapprove that

THE LITANY

which he beholds, and this with all the intensity of His being. God's anger is not of the nature of an impulsive feeling, like our vexation or bad temper; rather it is the steady attitude of hostility on the part of a perfectly holy Being towards disorder and wrong.¹

From this we pray that we may be delivered. And the sure way of deliverance is in escape, by His grace and our repentance, from the wrong and sin which must provoke His displeasure, wherever it is found and so long as it exists. God ever distinguishes, as we must learn to distinguish, between the sinner and the sin. He pities the sinner, while He hates the sin. He seeks to disentangle the wrong-doer from his wrong-doing. While the sinner wraps himself in his sin, refuses to be separated from it, he must remain an object of God's displeasure. "The wrath of God abideth upon him."² "The wrath of

¹ Rom. i. 8. See my volume on *The Forgiveness of Sins*, p. 4, and the references there given.

² John iii. 36.

AN EXPOSITION OF

the Lamb”^{*} of the incarnate Son, our Saviour, who gave His life to free men from the power of evil, has a peculiar terror, like the anger of one ordinarily self-controlled and gentle, but blazing forth in fierce purity against manifest wrong—high-handed oppression, it may be, or the selfish ruin of those who by their feebleness or innocence had a claim on our protection.

2. So we naturally pass to the thought of *everlasting damnation*. “From Thy wrath and from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us.” Now here the way to free our minds from all sorts of difficulties and objections is to think of the doom of the wicked—here and hereafter—in the light of Loss rather than of Punishment, not so much as something inflicted by another, as of ruin brought upon themselves by their own folly and wrong-doing.¹⁰ It is as with a squandered fortune, or wasted opportunities, or with health ruined through carelessness or dissipation—each

^{*} Rev. vi. 16.

¹⁰ See *The Forgiveness of Sins*, p. 8, and references.

THE LITANY

of these may be regarded as a punishment inflicted; it is more naturally thought of as a consequence in which our own foolish conduct has involved us. It is the working out of the great law of retribution which obtains throughout the whole of God's universe, moral as well as material; "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." ¹¹

We sow our thoughts and reap our actions,

We sow our actions and reap our habits,

We sow our habits and reap our characters,

We shall sow our character and reap our destiny.

We see that there is nothing unreasonable, nothing incompatible with God's justice or with His loving purpose for us, in the possibility (we need not say more) of irretrievable disaster and ruin, where a man deliberately and persistently rejects good and chooses evil. He may involve himself in everlasting damnation, in un-

¹¹ Gal. vi. 7, 8; Rev. xxii. 11, 12.

AN EXPOSITION OF

ending loss. Of this we are sure, that God rejects none who do not persistently reject Him, that He will lose none whom He can save, consistently with His respect for the free-will with which He has endowed man. No sin, we may say, is unpardonable on true repentance; but the sinner may lose the power to repent.¹² Save us then, O Lord, from Thy wrath and from everlasting damnation by delivering us from the sin which involves these dreadful evils.

3. We see *from what we are redeemed* or delivered. To redeem means to deliver at cost, to rescue. Not primarily from God's wrath; it was God's love that sent His Son to be our redeemer. Not chiefly from Hell. That was not the angel's explanation of the name to be given to the Holy Child. "His Name shall be called Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sins";¹³ not from the consequences of their sins, but from the sins themselves,

¹² Heb. vi. 4-6.

¹³ Matt. i. 21.

THE LITANY

from their pride and hate, their lust and greed, their fraud and sloth, from all that mars their manhood, and causes them shame, and of necessity calls forth God's displeasure. As we are delivered from physical death by the disease which would lead to death being cured; so, and so only, can we be saved from God's wrath and from everlasting damnation by being delivered from sin, of which these are the inevitable fruit and end."

Accordingly this is our entreaty, "From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from Thy wrath and from everlasting damnation, good Lord, deliver us." Like the explanation of the Lord's Prayer in the Catechism, this is an expansion of the petition "Deliver us from evil"—that is from sin, the evil *thing*; from Satan the evil "*person*"; from Hell, the evil *place or state*; from all sin and wickedness, and from our spiritual enemy, and from everlasting death."

"Rom. vi. 21, 23.

AN EXPOSITION OF

Sin is the wilful transgression of God's laws. These are not arbitrarily imposed; they are the expression of His wisdom and goodness, they mark out the path of our peace and welfare.¹⁵ The essence of sin is the rebellion of the will of the creature against the will of the Creator, the withdrawal of fellowship with Him.

4. Thus *the devil* sinned, a spiritual intelligence misusing his free will and becoming irretrievably set in evil, bent on ruining God's work, by violence or deceit (assault or craft) seeking to turn men and women from the obedience to God in which their true freedom is found.

5. From bondage to sin and Satan we are "redeemed with Christ's most precious Blood."¹⁶ We must not allow any material conception of Christ's Blood to remain in our minds. Blood throughout Scripture is the symbol of life.¹⁷ Blood shed stands for life laid down or taken. Blood sprinkled for life communicated. So that

¹⁵ I John iii. 4, v. 3; Deut. vi. 24.

¹⁶ I Peter i. 18, 19.

¹⁷ Gen. ix. 4; Lev. xvii. 11; I John i. 7.

THE LITANY

the meaning of being redeemed by Christ's Blood, is that we are freed from sin (and so from all its consequences) by, at the cost of, all the struggles, pains and toils of Christ's earthly life; by His absolute obedience to His Father's will at whatever cost, in spite of every obstacle, even though it involve death; by His painful and shameful death as the climax of His life of perfect obedience;" thus He gained a *moral* victory over sin and Satan, and broke the power of evil, enabling us, if we will follow His steps and seek His aid, to claim *our* freedom.

This is the real deliverance or rescue from evil on which we must chiefly fix our minds, for which above all we should ask in these petitions of the Litany—freedom from moral evil itself, and so (let me repeat once more) from any and all of its consequences. I do not say that this is the only aspect of redemption, nor the one which was most prominent in the minds of the compilers of the Litany. They prob-

¹¹ Phil. ii. 8.

AN EXPOSITION OF

ably, as was common in former days, laid special stress on the thought of sin as an offence against God which needed pardon. This is the aspect emphasized in the *Dies irae*, where we plead for pardon for our Lord's sake rather than for renewal by His grace.

King of majesty tremendous,
Who dost free salvation send us,
Fount of pity, then befriend us!

Think, kind Jesu, my salvation
Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation!

Guilty, now I pour my moaning,
All my shame with anguish owning;
Spare, O God, Thy suppliant groaning!

Thou the sinful woman savedst;
Thou the dying thief forgavest;
And to me a hope vouchsafest.

Worthless are my prayers and sighing,
Yet, good Lord, in grace complying,
Rescue me from fires undying!

Both aspects, pardon for His sake and renewal by His grace, are to some extent combined in the thought of *acceptance in Christ*. The two thoughts are linked to-

THE LITANY

gether in Toplady's hymn, "Rock of Ages"—

Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power;

or (less well) in a later version (by Cotterill)—

Save from wrath and make me pure.¹⁹

Both of course are true aspects of sin and of forgiveness. Only let us be careful to remember and to teach that God's forgiveness includes the loosing from the *power* of sins, the guilt of which He pardons; and that Christ was manifested to do away with and destroy the works of the devil, and not merely or chiefly to free us from the consequences of our sins.²⁰

So we pray, Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers, that is, remember them not against us; remember also our penitence, and so take not vengeance on the sins that we lament

¹⁹ I have tried to deal with this twofold aspect of sin and of its remission in my book *The Forgiveness of Sins*; see especially p. 34.

²⁰ I John iii. 5, 8.

AN EXPOSITION OF

and put away. "Remember not the offences of our forefathers" is not so much a prayer for *them* as for *ourselves* that we may not suffer by reason of their misdoing. We do of course (it is a matter of experience) suffer for the wrongdoing of others with whom in one way or another we are associated in varying degrees of intimacy. There is a solidarity of the family, of the nation, of the race. As we may have to endure loss of property through another's folly or fraud, or physical suffering from another's violence (and in other ways), or heart-ache from another's unkindness; so we may have to suffer shame on account of the wrongdoing of others, or worse moral harm from others' bad example and influence. In this way the sins of the fathers are visited upon their children, and not of one generation only.²¹

Well may we beg of God to intervene and remedy the evil, and put a stop to its baneful consequences.

Remember not, Lord, our offences, nor the

²¹ Ex. xx. 5.

THE LITANY

offences of our forefathers; neither take Thou vengeance of our sins: spare us, good Lord, spare Thy people whom Thou hast redeemed with Thy most precious Blood, and be not angry with us for ever.

Spare us, good Lord.

From all evil and mischief; from sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil; from Thy wrath, and from everlasting damnation,

Good Lord, deliver us.

WE pass from the consideration of sin in general—its nature and its consequences—to the thought of specific sins from which we beg to be delivered, that is, clearly from their *power* rather than from their *guilt*.

The next two groups of deprecations in the Litany refer the first to sins of a spiritual character, such as do not necessarily involve any participation by the body, such as might be committed by a disembodied or an unembodied spirit; and then the second group refers more particularly to sins in which external things have some share, whether in the way of temptation or of commission.

Mark you, spiritual sins come first. We are all perhaps apt to think more lightly of them, of pride and malice and envy, than of grosser and more obvious sins of sensuality or dishonesty or worldliness. But the spiritual sins may be more danger-



AN EXPOSITION OF

ous; partly because they are more subtle and less openly repellent, and partly because they strike more directly at the very centre of the soul's life. There is hope for the prodigal or for the worldling, that they may "come to themselves," and the higher elements of our nature, like the reason and the will, assert their independence against the tyranny of fashion or of bodily indulgence. But "what" (as our Lord asks) "if the light that is in thee be darkness?"²² What if those higher and ruling elements of our nature be themselves degraded and deranged? If the reason be blinded, and the conscience dulled, and the will perverted? It was through pride and disobedience, not through any deceit of the world or the flesh, that the angels fell and fell without hope of recovery. Well then may we cry—

From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,

Good Lord, deliver us.

²² Matt. vi. 23.

THE LITANY

You will see that this group has three clauses (divided one from another by a semi-colon, and not merely by a comma)—

(1) Blindness of heart, self-deceit, the more general;

(2) then sins that are various forms of pride;

(3) and then various forms of wrongful anger.

We begin with *blindness of heart*, which is at once a sin and the penalty or result of sin.²² Sin blinds the understanding and conscience, as well as binds the will. It withdraws us from the illumination of the Spirit of truth, as well as from the control of the Spirit of holiness and purity, and from the kindling of the Spirit of love. The most common word in the Greek Testament that we translate "sin" *ἀμαρτία* means a missing of the aim; it represents sin as a vast mistake, a looking on things from a wrong point of view. Sin blinds us as to ourselves and our real condition,

²² Rom. i. 23; Eph. iv. 18; I Tim. iv. 2.



AN EXPOSITION OF

as to God and His claims, as to our neighbour and his rights.

Accordingly "pride, vain-glory, and hypocrisy" follow naturally on "blindness of heart."

Humility, the opposite of pride, has been described as the victory of truth in the soul that dares to face the insignificance and pollution of self beneath the purity and majesty of God.*

Pride is an inordinate love of one's own honour and reputation, a perverted and exaggerated form of self-respect.

Vain-glory is a form of pride, when we delight in the empty applause or good opinion of others who do not know or judge us as we really are.

Hypocrisy is another form of pride, when we play a part and try to appear other and better than we are. All are kinds of self-love. We are so much in love with ourselves that we disguise faults and exaggerate good points, and greedily snatch

* See Dr. Liddon's sermon on "Humility and Action" in the first volume of his University Sermons.

THE LITANY

at praise by which to bolster up our self-conceit.

Then naturally this excessive love of self leads to a distorted relation to others, who seem in some way to rival or lessen our importance, and who contradict and interfere with our plans. Thus pride, exaggerated self-love, leads to un-love towards others.

Envy, the first-born daughter of pride, is a repining at others' good; a dreadful sin whose special blackness it is that it always fastens on some excellence, whether real or fancied.

Hatred stands for immoderate or unregulated anger, not distinguishing between a sinner and his sin, and stirred rather by personal annoyance at some crossing of our own plans than by resentment at what is in itself wrong.

Malice seeks another's hurt.

All uncharitableness covers all conduct that does not regard another's name or property or feelings as we should wish our own to be considered. The term includes negative forms of selfish neglect of others,

AN EXPOSITION OF

as well as the positive doing them some injury.

From all blindness of heart; from pride, vain-glory and hypocrisy; from envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness,

Good Lord, deliver us.

As we thus pray, we must examine ourselves to see if there be any of these roots of bitterness allowed to remain in our hearts.

Try me, O God, and seek the ground of my heart: prove me, and examine my thoughts. Look well if there be any way of wickedness in me : and lead me in the way everlasting.”

From spiritual sins, more distinctly “works of the devil,” such as he does, and in which he would have us imitate him, the transition is easy to other sins to which Satan tempts us through the allurements of the world and of the flesh, but of which he, proud spirit, would disdain to be guilty.

From all inordinate and sinful affections;

” Ps. cxxxix. 23, 24.

THE LITANY

and from all the deceits of the world, the flesh,
and the devil,

Good Lord, deliver us.

Of both these groups of sins the common root of all is self-love, whether (a) the love of our higher (not our better or regenerate) self, in independence of God, over against a loving and loyal obedience to Him; or (b) the love of our lower nature, indulging it unduly with pleasure and external comforts and possessions. The *inordinate and sinful affections* from which we beg to be delivered specially refer to wrongful indulgence of the body and its sensual desires. This is clear from the petition in the English Prayer Book, of which ours is a paraphrase, "From fornication, and all other deadly sin." We mean to ask to be delivered from a misuse of those bodily powers which God has given us for high and noble purposes, for the handing on of life; from disregard of the laws of purity, the restraints of modesty, the rights of others in all such matters;*

* I Thess. iv. 3-6.

AN EXPOSITION OF

from over-softness in the treatment of the body, which tends to weaken our control over its passions; from wrongful or excessive indulgence in food or drink; from undue love of ease and consequent slothfulness in the performance of our various duties; from undisciplined thoughts and desires. All this would come under "inordinate and sinful affections," from which we ask to be delivered, and against which therefore we must be watchfully on our guard; otherwise our prayer would be a mockery, if we asked to be delivered from evil, while we were exposing ourselves to temptation.

Especially are we bound to be watchful and careful because of *the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil*. We are in the midst of a fallen world, which is under the influence of Satan, the liar and the murderer, its prince," and we carry about a disordered nature, easily attracted and deluded by appearances of seeming good, which soon prove unsatisfying and vain.

²⁷ John viii. 44, xiv. 30; I John v. 19.

THE LITANY

From these *deceits* we are to be delivered by the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, who voluntarily lived in poverty and self-restraint, and by the guidance and help of the Holy Spirit, who is promised to lead into all truth (of life as well as of faith) those who submit to His warnings and inspirations.

The Christian Religion distinctly enjoins a life of discipline and restraint; not of self-destruction but of self-surrender, that in losing our lower we may find our higher life. We are not to be indifferent to the experiences of life, its joys and sorrows, its worthy ambitions or its disappointments; we are to seek to *pass through* them all, undeterred by pains and unhindered by pleasures, letting each have its intended effect upon us. So we must seek to keep ourselves unspotted from the world; as the children of God guarded by the Son of God, that the evil one take not hold of us, to hurt or taint or lead astray.²⁸ One word in conclusion. From all these

²⁸ James i. 27; I John v. 18, 19.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LITANY

sins and evils we pray "Good Lord, deliver *us*,"—not *me*; it is a common prayer, not only of and for the immediate congregation present, but on behalf of all God's people, and all whom He would make His people.

Evils and temptations that we dread for ourselves, we must do all in our power to ward off from others. We should ask ourselves (1) in regard to children and others who are specially committed to our care, are we taking thought and pains in respect to their amusements, their reading, their companions, and by their general training seeking to protect them from or guard them against the deceits of the world, the flesh, and the devil? And (2) in the community at large are we doing what we can in helping to remove unnecessary temptations and stumbling-blocks from the path of others' children or brothers and sisters? *Our Father*, lead *us* not into temptation, but deliver *us* from evil.

THE next group of Deprecations is generally concerned with evils that may come upon us *from without*, as distinct from sins which we *commit*. "From lightning and tempest; from plague, pestilence and famine; from battle and murder, and from sudden death." Of old these petitions were offered separately; they are now arranged in triplets. Notice the beauty of the rhythm; this is one of the debts we owe to Archbishop Cranmer. One might suggest the addition after the first clause "From lightning and tempest" of the words "From fire and flood" as perhaps the most frequent and destructive calamities to which *we* are exposed.

It is not my purpose to dwell on each petition. I am not attempting an exhaustive exposition; but rather to give hints and suggestions. So concerning the larger part of this group—"From lightning and tempest; from plague,

AN EXPOSITION OF

pestilence, and famine"—I will content myself with considering an objection which is often made to any such prayers, "What is the good of praying against evils of this kind? Is it right to do so? Can God be expected to change the laws in accordance with which such things occur?" A *subjective* value some would allow to prayer against *sins* for which we are responsible, because they would say (and rightly) that our *will* should go along with our prayer, and in praying for deliverance from a sin we really ask that our will may be strengthened to resist and put away the temptation. But is it reasonable to pray against evils for which we are not responsible? Our answer to the objection is three-fold.

1. The very sense of our helplessness leads us to place ourselves consciously under God's protection. We claim the promises of the 91st Psalm: "Whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. He shall deliver thee from the snare of the hunter and from the noisome pestil-

THE LITANY

ence. Thou shalt not be afraid for any terror by night, nor for the sickness that destroyeth in the noon-day. There shall no evil happen unto thee: neither shall any plague come nigh thy dwelling."

2. We do not ask that laws of nature (as we call them) may be altered, but that some other force may be brought in to counteract the operation of an existing law which, unimpeded, would work destruction. God is free in His action, though (as observation teaches us) He acts ordinarily in the same manner.

3. So we see that our cooperation is not absent, and when we thus pray, we pledge ourselves to work along with God. For instance, if we pray to be delivered from pestilence, we must remove unsanitary conditions. The discovery of causes and of remedies (e. g. as to the carrying of infection by insects) may be God's way of answering our prayer. Prayer requires us to be alert. It must never be a substitute for our own effort. In prayer we place ourselves at God's disposal, that He

AN EXPOSITION OF

may be able to work *in* us and *through* us, to accomplish His purposes.

About each of the remaining evils in this group, from which we ask to be delivered, "battle and murder and sudden death," I would give a word of explanation.

(a) Beside all its attendant and consequent horrors and misery, War is a sad waste of *life*; of *money*, e. g. in battleships which cost a fabulous sum to build and then in a very short time are superseded and good for nothing; and of *energy* withdrawing men(and in their best years) from productive labour; moreover the military system is ruinous to morals in herding men together in unnatural conditions, away from the safeguards and responsibilities of family life. Resort to physical violence and force should be the last resort, when reason and argument have failed. It may be necessary then, just as the policeman and magistrate and jail are necessary in municipal life, for persons who will not be persuaded to live quietly and peaceably. So as we pray to be de-

THE LITANY

livered "from battle," we must do all in our power to promote human and reasonable methods of settling disputes among persons or classes or nations. In Daniel's vision" the "four great beasts" represent kingdoms founded on brute force; these give way before the kingdom of intelligence and conscience represented by a human figure, a form like unto a son of man.*

(b) On the prayer for deliverance from "murder" two remarks ought to be made, though they refer to it as a sin in the commission of which we may have some share, rather than as a calamity which we may suffer.

(1) The destruction of human life in whatever initial stage, to avoid pain or shame, is wrong. We must be ready to accept the consequences of our actions. There may be exceptional and extreme cases, where the sacrifice of the child is necessary to save the life of the mother—for the husband's sake and that of other chil-

* Dan. vii.

* See Note at end on International Peace.

AN EXPOSITION OF

dren (it would not be at *her* own choice); just as it may become necessary to take life in war, or in capital punishment for the good of the community, not in vengeance but as frowning down evil, and expressing the community's reprobation of a crime.

(2) Self-destruction is wicked and cowardly. It is a tremendous responsibility to shorten the time of our probation, to throw away the opportunity, it may be, of working out repentance for wrong-doing. Do not dally with suggestions of this kind, nor allow the mind—your own or another's—to become familiarized with the thought. Spread healthy, wholesome teaching and influence about such subjects. We should cultivate a sense of the sacredness of life. "From battle and murder, good Lord, deliver us."

(c) And "from sudden death." As Hooker puts it, our prayer against this importeth a two-fold desire: first, that death when it cometh may give us some convenient respite for religion's sake and our more immediate preparation for the

THE LITANY

change; or secondly, if that be denied us of God, that though death be unexpected and sudden in itself, nevertheless in regard of our prepared minds it may not be sudden to us."

Bishop Andrewes teaches us to pray:

We beseech of Thee
for the close of our life,
that Thou wouldest direct it in peace,
Christian, acceptable,
sinless, shameless,
and, if it please Thee, painless;
gathering us together
under the feet of Thine elect,
when Thou wilt, and as Thou wilt,
only without shame and sins.²¹

We pass to another group of Deprecations (the last) in which we pray against what we may call corporate or social evils, rebellion and disorder (whether open or secret) in the sphere of corporate life, whether national or ecclesiastical. "From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebel-

²⁰ *Ecclesiastical Polity*, book v., ch. xlvi.

²¹ *Devotions*, Order for Evening Prayer.

AN EXPOSITION OF

lion," and "from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism," that is, from self-willed disregard of authority in the region of thought or practice, from causing needless division in the Christian body. This is traced to its source. Rebellion against God, the source of all authority in Church or State, in family or school, is at the bottom of these disorders. Therefore we go on to pray "from hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word and Commandment"—however given to us—"Good Lord, deliver us."

We cannot go into a discussion of all possible cases, nor of the circumstances which may render unavoidable or justifiable resistance to authority when it is overstrained or unlawfully exercised. Here we are concerned with the general principle, that the common good of all requires the subordination of individual or class interests and preferences to the welfare of the whole body. To join in this prayer for deliverance from heresy and schism, and then to take part in the worship, or support the organization, of those

THE LITANY

who (whatever allowance may be made for inherited association and prejudice) are separated from the communion of the historic Church, would seem altogether inconsistent. Let us earnestly pray for the healing of divisions and the explanation of misunderstandings; but garments are not mended by rents being ignored. In connexion with this principle we must always remember that there is a mutual duty, a reciprocal obligation, between parents and children, between rulers and subjects in every sphere. Parents and others must rule "in the Lord" as representing Him, not enforcing their own arbitrary whims, if they are to be obeyed for His sake. Fathers, says the Apostle, provoke not your children, that they be not discouraged."

Amid much that causes anxiety and a good deal that is provoking in the civil and in the ecclesiastical sphere, let us cultivate a temper of conciliation, a spirit of subordination, a sense of mutual responsibility. And let us be quite sure that no

²² Eph. vi. 4; Col. iii. 21.

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LITANY

good end is ever served by a spirit of lawlessness or by disregard of authority. In Dante's great poem Church and State, the spiritual and the temporal empire, are both regarded as God's institution for the guidance of mankind; to rebel against either is to rebel against God. The salvation of the world and the happiness of mankind, depend on the full and righteous exercise of the powers of each within its sphere. Accordingly Brutus and Cassius who slew Julius Caesar, the embodiment of the empire, are placed by Dante in the same depth of Hell with Judas Iscariot, who betrayed Jesus Christ, the Founder of the Church.³³

³³ *Inferno*, xxxiv. 55-67.

THE petitions in the Litany that begin with "By"—"By the mystery of Thy holy incarnation," "By Thy cross and passion," and so on—are called Obsecrations. We plead by what our Lord has done and suffered for us that He will hear us, spare us, deliver us. They are addressed, as is the greater part of the Litany, to our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God, now exalted in our human nature to God's right hand, which means to the highest place at once of honour and of power. Such petitions involve of course a belief in His Godhead. It is because He is God that we pray to Him, and that we can plead the events of His earthly life as having such transcendent significance and virtue. It is because He is the Son of God made man that we are sure of His fellow feeling with us in our infirmities. Our prayers take for granted

AN EXPOSITION OF

our creed. The rule of prayer is the rule of faith.

There are four distinct senses, not exclusive one of another, in which we may understand and offer these petitions, and others like them.

1. We plead all that our Lord has done and suffered on our behalf as a ground for His compassion and attention to our prayer. It is equivalent to the Scriptural plea "By Thy mercy" thus expressed and manifested, or "For Thy Name's sake." Reject not those whom Thou hast purchased at such a price; pity those to whom Thou hast shown such favour. Let it not be in vain that Thou hast come down from heaven and entered into our created life, and then hast further humbled Thyself as man, even to the death of the cross. So the great hymn *Dies irae* (which we have already quoted) pleads:

Think, kind Jesu, my salvation
Caused Thy wondrous Incarnation;
Leave me not to reprobation.
Faint and weary Thou hast sought me,
On the cross of suffering bought me:
Shall such grace be vainly brought me?

THE LITANY

Then, on the other hand, we can hardly say the prayer without hearing an appeal to ourselves. Let it not be in vain that the Lord Jesus Christ has done and suffered all this. Let Him see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. In particular since the Son of God has hallowed our nature in its every part, by Himself assuming it and making it the instrument for the manifestation of His divine life and character, let us do all in our power to save that human nature, in ourselves and in others, from everything that is degrading or unworthy.

2. This is the first meaning to give to our petitions, "By": Let it not be in vain. Then, secondly, we pray to our Lord by the remembrance of His earthly experiences to consider and help us when we are in like conditions or circumstances. He still wears our human nature. That is the meaning of the Ascension. As man He was exalted to the glory which ever belonged to His divine nature and person."

" John xvii. 5.

AN EXPOSITION OF

St. Stephen and St. John beheld Him as the Son of man in the glory of God.²⁵ And He still bears the traces of His earthly life. He is seen as the Lamb as it had been slain. As His sacred hands and feet and side retain the marks of the nails and spear, so He treasures in His mind and heart the remembrance of Bethlehem and Nazareth and Bethany, of Gethsemane and Gabbatha and Golgotha, Gethsemane with its spiritual wrestling, Gabbatha with its contradiction and false accusation, Golgotha with its cruel and shameful death.

On His side our calling Him to mind may be needless; for us it is a strengthening of our assurance concerning His sympathy. "In that He Himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted."²⁶ Two well known hymns, among many others, shew the hold that this thought has gained on the minds and hearts of Christian peo-

²⁵ Acts vii. 55, 56; Rev. i. 13, 17, v. 6.

²⁶ Heb. ii. 18.

THE LITANY

ple. In Sir Robert Grant's Litany hymn "Saviour, when in dust to Thee," (so called let me remind you, not because it was intended to be sung before the Prayer Book Litany, but because it is itself a Litany,) we say—

By Thy helpless infant years,
By Thy life of want and tears,
By Thy days of sore distress
In the savage wilderness,
By the dread permitted hour
Of the mighty tempter's power,
Turn, Oh turn a favouring eye,
Hear our solemn Litany.

Dean Milman in his "When our heads are bowed with woe" teaches us to pray—

Thou our throbbing flesh hast worn,
Thou our mortal griefs hast borne,
Thou hast shed the human tear;
Jesu, Son of Mary, hear.

Thou hast bowed the dying head,
Thou the blood of life hast shed,
Thou hast filled a mortal bier;
Jesu, Son of Mary, hear.

Thou the shame, the grief, hast known,
Though the sins were not Thine own;
Thou hast deigned their load to bear;
Jesu, Son of Mary, hear.

AN EXPOSITION OF

I have only quoted alternate stanzas of the hymn. I cannot think why we do not more often have it sung at funerals as a prayer in which we associate ourselves with the departed as well as with the mourners. I would so very much prefer it for my own burial to a jubilant song about the joys of heaven. One feels it would be so much more real and in harmony with the soul's attitude of deepened penitence and self-abasement in the nearer or realized presence of God.

So we may pray, Help and comfort and deliver us in trouble by the remembrance of the pang of separation from Thy Mother, By the worse pain of desertion by Thy disciples, By Thy suffering under the misrepresentation of foes, and the misunderstanding of friends, By Thy bearing the apparent failure of Thy work, By Thy wrestling with the evil one, and the hiding of Thy Father's face. And as we call to remembrance His sorrows, so we may also plead His pure human joys and interests; By Thy love for Thy Mother, and

THE LITANY

Thy friends, hear our prayers for all who are near and dear to us.

3. Then, thirdly, there is a moral sense in which we offer these prayers; asking that we may have grace to follow our Lord's *example* shewn in these several events or mysteries,—the poverty of His Nativity, the humility shewn in His submission to Circumcision and to Baptism, His obedience in the Temptation, His gentleness and courage in the Passion. The moral virtues thus exhibited we pray that we may imitate. Suffer us not to be altogether untrue to this pattern. What a shame to be a soft and luxurious member of a Head that was crowned with thorns! If any have not the Spirit of Christ—the Spirit that shewed itself in meekness and obedience, in endurance and prayerfulness—he is none of His.”

4. Fourth, in a deeper and more spiritual sense we pray that we may share the *virtue* of each mystery. Each has its in-

” Rom. viii. 9.

AN EXPOSITION OF

tended and proper effect on our lives; each should have its counterpart in our spiritual experience. This is brought before us, or expressed, in many of the collects for holy-days, for instance, for Christmas, Easter Even and Easter Day, the Ascension. Christ was born for us, that we might be re-born in Him. For us He died, that with Him we might die to sin and self. For us He rose, that in Him we too may rise to newness of life. Christ, remember always, is our Leader and our Representative, rather than our substitute. He did not suffer that we might live easy, self-indulgent lives, but that we might arm ourselves with the same mind. He was not tempted that we might escape temptation, but that we might be able to withstand temptation. He did not die that we might be enabled to avoid death, but to hallow the grave, that for us too it may be a gate of life. In all that He did and suffered we must (in our measure) have our share, if we would profit by His work. If the Captain of our salvation was made perfect through sufferings, that was be-

THE LITANY

cause this is the way in which all God's children are to be brought to glory."

We must not fail to give prominence to the one mystery among those enumerated which does not strictly belong to our Lord's incarnate life, though it is closely connected with it, "By the coming of the Holy Ghost, good Lord, deliver us." By the gift of the indwelling Spirit, whom Thou didst promise to send on Thy disciples when Thou didst go to the Father, to be their abiding Guide and Helper; By His indwelling presence in Thy Church and in individual disciples, Deliver us from earthliness, from worldly judgments, from cowardice or selfishness, from all that is contrary to His character of Truth and Purity and Love. In this way we should plead the mysteries of our faith, and as the seasons come round at which we specially commemorate them one by one, we should take care that the commemoration of the past historical event brings with it the

²² Heb. ii. 10.



AN EXPOSITION OF

appropriate grace for our spiritual up-building.

Closely following on the Obsecrations appropriately come the prayers for deliverance in the varied experiences of our life. "In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our prosperity (more dangerous, perhaps); in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, Good Lord, deliver us." It is the same good Lord, our Emmanuel now as when on earth, who has passed through all the vicissitudes of human life, its joys and its sorrows, who at the last commended His departing soul into His Father's hands, whom we entreat to protect and support and steady us in all the vicissitudes of our life, that we be not overwhelmed by adversity, nor swept away by prosperity, that in the hour of our departure He would receive us, and in the last and dreadful day of final account, spare and pity us.

THE LITANY

Righteous Judge! for sin's pollution
Grant Thy gift of absolution
Ere that day of retribution.

With Thy favoured sheep Oh, place me,
Nor among the goats abase me,
But to Thy right hand upraise me.

AFTER the Invocations, calling on each Person of the Trinity, the Deprecations, praying to be delivered from various forms of evil, and the Obsecrations, in which we plead the mysteries of our Lord's life, come the Supplications of the Litany, or petitions for various blessings for ourselves and others. These we may mostly group under three great divisions:

(1) The first six are supplications for God's people at large, under religious or civil organizations, with their representatives and rulers;

(2) The next four are supplications for various classes of persons according to their spiritual needs;

(3) Then come four more for various classes according to their temporal necessities. On these there follow at the end three more detached petitions.

The Litany follows the apostle's bid-



AN EXPOSITION OF

ding to Timothy, as chief pastor of the Church at Ephesus: "I exhort, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity." "

In the first of the groups I have arranged we are taught to pray especially for the Church, for rulers, for the clergy, for all nations.

(a) For the Church, that she may faithfully and boldly bear her witness to the revelation she has received for faith and life (both, remember, are included in the religion of Jesus Christ), and at the same time may adapt herself to different ages and peoples, speaking in the tongue and thought of each. This is to be done through us, her members, in whatever position of prominence or obscurity we may be. The Church on earth has no existence apart from the men and women, the boys and girls, who make it up. The Church

" I Tim. ii. 1, 2.

THE LITANY

has its ideal life to which we must seek to rise, its mission which we must carry out, its offices which we must be prepared to fill.

Thus we pray, "That it may please Thee to rule and govern Thy holy Church universal in the right way; We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord." Our prayers stretch beyond our own congregation or parish or diocese or communion, to embrace the whole of Christ's Church, the blessed company of all faithful people, in whatever land, or among people of whatever stage of civilization, amid whatever circumstances. So with Bishop Andrewes we pray

For the Church Catholic, its confirmation and increase:

Eastern, its deliverance and union:

Western, its readjustment and pacification:

British, the restoration of the things that are wanting therein, the strengthening of the things that remain."

We pray that the Lord, the Head of the Body, will by His Spirit guide and govern

⁴⁰ Daily Prayers, for Monday. Brightman's edition, p. 60—comp. p. 32.

AN EXPOSITION OF

it in the right way, to fulfil its mission, to bear its witness, to train its members, to lead all to and in "the way" (which was a name for the Christian religion in apostolic days⁴¹), the Way that leadeth to everlasting life, the Way of holiness—of truth and purity and peace. Without enquiry here as to the exact limits of the Church, on the side either of orthodox doctrine or of apostolic order, we pray for all who profess and call themselves Christians that they may be led into the way of truth, and hold the faith in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. May the Church be continually increased by the gathering in of new children, and perfected by the increasing devotion of those who have been regenerated.

(b) After the petition for the welfare of the whole Church, in accordance with the apostle's precept, we pray first of all for those who are set in positions of civil authority, "That it may please Thee to bless and preserve all Christian Rulers and

⁴¹ Acts ix. 2, xix. 9, 23, xxiv. 4, 14, 22.

THE LITANY

Magistrates, giving them grace to execute justice, and to maintain truth."

The offering of such a petition earnestly and habitually ought to check rash criticism and carping. In general a people gets the rulers it deserves. In a representative government like ours we are responsible for those whom we elect to office and entrust with the authority of governance in city, state or nation. If we recognized more clearly our responsibility, our words of prayer might be more earnest, our criticism less harsh, more humble. Let us learn to work along with those in authority—in positions oftentimes of great difficulty as well as of splendid opportunity. It is our right to advise and check them in all legitimate ways, and our duty to uphold them with our prayers.

(c) "That it may please Thee to illuminate all Bishops, Priests and Deacons, with true knowledge and understanding of Thy Word; and that both by their preaching and living they may set it forth and show it accordingly." Here again our interests are to be wide. It is not

AN EXPOSITION OF

only our own immediate pastors, parochial or diocesan, for whom we pray, but for all the Ministers of God's Word and Sacraments, in their several orders and offices; and our regard is to be prayerful, calling forth for them gifts of sanctifying and enabling grace. The clergy are made out of laymen. They ought to be as St. Paul says, "pattern-believers in word and behaviour (the external expressions of the Christian life), in faith and love (its ruling motives), in purity (its consecrating grace). But they start as men of like nature and infirmities with others. "Men, not Angels, the Priests of the Gospel" is the striking title of a sermon of Dr. Newman's. As leaders they have a claim on our sympathy and prayers as well as on our allegiance. Leaders in any sphere, in army or navy, in Church or state, can do little without loyal followers.

Ministers are made out of laymen. Lay people should offer themselves, or encourage their children and others to offer them-

"I Tim. iv. 12.

THE LITANY

selves, for the replenishing of the ranks of the Ministry. The petition must not be an idle prayer, "That it may please Thee to send forth labourers into Thy harvest." We must encourage vocations, and do our part to help likely men prepare for Holy Orders. Let us cherish and spread a true and high conception of the Christian Ministry. Remember this definition: It is the dedication of life with all its powers to the service of our fellows in their highest interests." We will pray then for the clergy—

for the multiplication of vocations to the ministry,

for the training of head and heart,

for sanctification of life,

for loyalty to Christ, His truth, His Church,

for knowledge and judgment,

for leadership,

for zeal for souls,

for devotion in prayer and sacraments,

for patience and perseverance.

"See a Sermon by Dean Church on "The Purpose of the Christian Ministry" in his volume *Human life and its conditions*.

AN EXPOSITION OF

In a word, that they may rightly divide the word of truth, and may walk uprightly.

(d) The petitions for the Ministry are followed immediately by the prayer "That it may please Thee to bless and keep all Thy people." We are thankful largely to have got rid of the expression about a man's "entering the Church" when he was admitted to Holy Orders. But I am afraid we have by no means got free from the thought which underlies the expression. We need to realize that lay people are just as truly a part of the Church as the clergy; that their services in their several lines of duty are just as acceptable to God as is the work of a priest. The physician and the nurse, the lawyer and the statesman, the soldier and the sailor and the policeman, the teacher and the writer, the merchant and the clerk, the artist and the artisan, the farmer and the fisherman, the mother of a family and the domestic servant, should be each in his or her vocation and ministry as truly serving God and His Church as the priest in his particular office. All are included in the petition,

THE LITANY

"That it may please Thee to bless and keep all Thy people."

(e) From all estates of men in the Church our prayer passes to "all nations," "That it may please Thee to give to all nations unity, peace and true concord." As with persons and with classes, so with nations, we must learn that coöperation and not competition, friendliness and not antagonism, is the true law, according to God's design, which in the Christian Church we must seek to realize. God has made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on the face of the whole earth. He has distributed to different races different gifts—of resources and ability and temperament. Each is to become its best, that it may make its special contribution to the common treasury. Think of some characteristics of different peoples, and how the human race, newborn in the Christian Church, ought to be enriched by the gifts of each. The absence of any would be a loss to all. As the title on the Cross was written in Hebrew and Greek and Latin, telling of the City of God being built at

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LITANY

the confluence of the three streams of Hebrew religious inspiration, of Greek literature and philosophy, and of Roman organization, so in later ages the grace and devotion of the Latin peoples of southern Europe, and the intellectual and moral sturdiness of the Teuton have been brought into the kingdom; and in our own day we are to claim for Christ the persistent patience of China, the delicacy of Japan, the subtlety of the Hindu, and the affectionateness of the Negro. Each people needs Christ, and the Christian Church needs each people, and we all need one another.*

* See Note at the end on International Peace.

AFTER the Supplications for Christ's people at large there follow four groups of Supplications for various classes of persons according to their spiritual needs. For all of them we pray to the "good Lord" who in the days of His earthly ministry invited Himself to be a guest of Zacchaeus the publican, promised Paradise to the penitent robber on the cross, gave the word of absolution to the penitent woman whose sins, though many, were forgiven because she loved much, and had compassion on the woman taken in adultery, who restored Peter on his penitence to the position he had forfeited by his denial of his Master; who, on the other hand, insisted on bringing home her misdoings to the woman of Samaria, who required Nicodemus to be born again if he would see the things of God, who rebuked the undisciplined zeal of His disciples James and

AN EXPOSITION OF

John, and bade others count the cost involved in His service, who rebuked the hypocrites and self-righteous, and declared He came not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." So He dealt with all gently and firmly, adapting His treatment, like a wise physician, to the varying needs of those who came before Him. We will take these petitions separately.

(a) "That it may please Thee to give us an heart to love and fear Thee, and diligently to live after Thy commandments."

The needle of fear, it has been said, must pierce the heart before the thread of love can bind it to God. Love, when it is perfected, casts out fear, because the work of fear has then been done;" but few of us have arrived at that stage of maturity and perfect love, which puts us beyond the need of fearing God, His holiness and His judgments.

" Luke xix. 1-10, xxiii. 42, 43, vii. 47-50; John viii. 10, 11, xxi. 15-17, iv. 16-18, iii. 3; Luke ix. 54, 55, xiv. 25, etc.; Matt. xxiii; Luke v. 31, 32.

" I John iv. 18.

THE LITANY

How wonderful, how beautiful,
The sight of Thee must be,
Thine endless wisdom, boundless power,
And awful purity!

Oh, how I fear Thee, living God,
With deepest, tenderest fears,
And worship Thee with trembling hope,
And penitential tears!

And while the fear that hath torment, the purifying fear, may be by degrees outgrown, cast out by maturing love that unites the soul with God, so that we love and desire what He loves, and hate and shrink from all that is abhorrent to Him; the fear of reverent awe will still increase along with advancing knowledge and love.* "Our Father, hallowed be Thy Name" is the children's prayer. We must never think that intimacy is shewn by rude familiarity. The sense of God's greatness will add seriousness to all our approaches to Him, and induce a reverence of thought and speech (a careful handling is the meaning of the Greek word) in all our dealing with sacred things, in prayer and sacra-

* Heb. xii. 28; Ps. lxxxix. 8.



AN EXPOSITION OF

ment, in scripture and creed. Love and fear will together quicken our obedience. In varied forms this is again and again expressed in the 119th Psalm:

Oh how I love thy law,
It is my meditation all the day.
My flesh trembleth for fear of thee:
And I am afraid of thy judgments."

The diligent, watchful, prompt keeping of God's commandments is the test of a true love, shewn in self-surrender, not in sentiment or emotion, and of a holy fear which does not discourage or repel, but serves as a spur to greater earnestness in God's service."

(b) The next set of petitions may be regarded as a devotional summary of the Parable of the Sower. For all Christ's people we ask a continually increasing measure of His grace—His favourable help, that is—the interior assistance of His Holy Spirit, with a view to the right and profitable reception of His Word, in what-

"vv. 97, 120.

"John xiv. 15, 21, xv. 10; Prov. i. 7; Deut. x. 12, 13.

THE LITANY

ever way it is presented to us. This may be through the reading of Scripture, by the authoritative preaching of His ministers, in private exhortations and the example of friends, in warnings of conscience.

We must not rely on past gifts of grace, however surely attested by Sacraments or experience. That grace did its work, or enabled us to accomplish what God was then calling us to. But His calls are progressive; His Word is ever active, and leading us on to further revelations of His mind and will.* And to correspond with His continually renewed demands or invitations we need the continual assistance of His grace—daily bread for daily needs.

Our correspondence is spoken of under three heads:

To hear meekly—listening in a docile not a critical spirit; to *receive with pure affection*—giving a loving not a grudging welcome; to *bring forth the fruits of the Spirit*—cherishing the word, that what has

* Heb. iv. 12.

AN EXPOSITION OF

been heard with the outward ear may be grafted inwardly in the heart, taking possession of us, to mould our thoughts and stir our wills, that our lives may be transformed thereby."

St. Paul gives a nine-fold enumeration of the fruits of the Spirit, the intended effect of all the means of grace, the proper result of the Spirit of God acting upon the spirit of man. The fruit of the Spirit, he says, is love, joy, peace—these mark the soul's true attitude towards God; long-suffering, gentleness, goodness (that is active beneficence) towards our neighbors; faithfulness (absolute trustworthiness), meekness, and self-control in oneself.⁶⁰

We may speak of them as fruits or fruit, in the plural or in the singular. They are allied virtues, springing from one source, the manifestation of one transfigured character, called forth in their varied beauty by various opportunities.

That the Word of God may have this

⁶⁰ James i. 21.

⁶¹ Gal. v. 22, 23.

THE LITANY

effect on us we must put ourselves for its reception in the attitude of Samuel, saying Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth; of St. Paul, Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do? of the Blessed Virgin Mary in response to the message of the angel, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy word.⁵²

What better prayer for a Sunday morning (whether the Litany be said or not) than this, with reference to all the ministrations of the Church, "That it may please Thee to give to all Thy people increase of grace to hear meekly Thy Word, and to receive it with pure affection, and to bring forth the fruits of the Spirit"?

(c) Under the next petition two mistakes must be noticed into which we are apt to fall. (1) There is a common notion that whatever opinion a man holds, whatever course of action he follows, is right *for him* at any rate, if only he adopts it conscientiously, in good faith. This is agnosticism full-blown, applied to conduct

⁵² I Sam. iii. 9; Acts xxii. 10; Luke i. 38.

AN EXPOSITION OF

as well as to faith. On the contrary we believe that there is an objective Right and Truth, whether we recognize it or not. And accordingly we pray for all such as have erred (more consciously) or are (less wilfully) deceived, that they may be brought into the way of Truth.

One might just as well contend that every one should keep his watch or clock at whatever time he pleased, that this would be the time of day for him. It would be an exceedingly inconvenient arrangement, one clock, for instance, shewing a quarter before nine, and another twenty-five minutes past four. Arrangements and appointments (railroad and other) would of course be impossible. All the confusion would proceed from ignoring the fact that, however imperfectly our clocks may register it, there is an objective standard of time, in the rising and setting of the sun, from which we derive our standard time for different localities, and to this we set our clocks and watches. So there is for faith and life the revelation of God's mind and will—given in con-

THE LITANY

science, through great teachers whom He has raised up, culminating in our Lord Jesus Christ, His incarnate Son, recorded in Scripture, accepted and witnessed to by His Church. By this standard or rule our individual opinions and judgments are to be corrected.

(2) There is a mistake of a somewhat different, almost an opposite, kind.

We are apt to regard those whom we sincerely believe to be in error, with a spirit of hostility or of contempt. Our attitude should rather be that of pity (which is akin to love), thinking of the loss they suffer for comfort and inspiration from their unbelief or misbelief. Every truth denied or obscured leaves people poorer and weaker in the face of the temptations, the sorrows, the perplexities of life. We should remember too how largely we, the Christian Church at any rate, may be responsible for the errors into which people fall, by our unloving or illogical presentation of the truth, or by our behaviour so inconsistent with what we profess, by which they have been not unnatur-



AN EXPOSITION OF

ally repelled. Humbly therefore and lovingly we will pray, "That it may please Thee to bring into the way of truth all such as have erred and are deceived."

Here may be noticed the solemn intercession on behalf of those who are apart from the Christian Church which has been for many centuries, from very early times, a feature of the Good Friday service. This is perpetuated, however briefly, in our third collect of the day, in which we pray for mercy on all Jews, Turks, infidels and heretics, begging God to take from them all ignorance, hardness of heart, and contempt of His Word, and to fetch them home to His flock. Why objection should be felt on the part of the Jews to this intercession is to me a simple puzzle. Our prayer for them is surely an expression of charity, not of hatred or contempt. If we believe that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they (in ignorance, as St. Peter says) rejected and crucified, is the true Messiah and God's incarnate Son, we must pray that they may be brought to an acknowledgment of the truth. That we should place them first

THE LITANY

among false believers implies no insult. We pray for those who reject our Lord; for those who follow a later prophet; for those who are without the Christian faith (that is the meaning of "infidels," and applies to Buddhists or Hindus or Confucianists); and for heretics, who have violated the fundamental faith of the Church and broken away from its communion. To sacrifice this detailed, though compressed, intercession for unbelievers and misbelievers (following the intercession for the Christian family, and for all orders and estates of men therein) on the day of the Lord's death that He might gather into one the children of God that are scattered abroad, from a feeling of spurious delicacy, would seem to me a profound mistake. Let us rather avoid any flippant repetition of the enumeration in the collect (which might well give offence), and any light regard of the rejection of God's revelation.

(d) In the next group of petitions, for perseverance to the faithful, stability to the wavering, recovery for the fallen, final victory for all strugglers, we may again

AN EXPOSITION OF

remind ourselves to whom we make our supplications, even to the good Lord, who would not break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax," to Him who engaged in deadly struggle with the evil one and Himself experienced the fierceness of his attacks. The seed of the woman, at the expense of his own heel being bruised in the encounter, has crushed the serpent's head, and, following our Leader, we can trample the evil one under our feet." From God's persevering, forbearing care for us, upholding us when we stand, raising us when we fall, recalling us when we wander, and receiving us when we return, what a lesson should we learn, not only of hopefulness, but of like patient dealing with others, not easily throwing them over or letting them go, however discouraging or wayward any may seem! Again and again the assurance that someone cared (a reflexion of the heavenly Friend) has

"Matt. xii. 20.

"Gen. iii. 15; John xiv. 30, xvi. 33.

THE LITANY

been the means of restoring self-respect when this was nearly lost.

Following His example who came to seek and to save that which was lost, this is the characteristic of the Christian Church, in a special way through its official ministry, but by no means only so. If the Church is to bear her witness against all wrong and wickedness—with righteousness to defend the poor and decide with equity for the meek of the earth, she is (perhaps still more) to be forward to bind up the brokenhearted, to strengthen the weak hands and confirm the feeble knees."

She is to remit as well as to retain sins in the Lord's name. This is the meaning of her ministry of reconciliation, relieving burdened consciences and putting forth spiritual power to free men and women from the bondage of evil habits."

Listen to the charge addressed to a Bishop at the moment of his consecration, which tells not of his exclusive preroga-

" Isa. xi. 4, xxxv. 3, 4; Heb. xii. 12.

" John xx. 23; I Cor. v. 3-5; II Cor. i. 10.

AN EXPOSITION OF

tive, but of duties which preëminently belong to him as the head and representative of Christians within a certain district, as the chief pastor of a diocese. "Hold up the weak, heal the sick; bind up the broken, bring again the outcasts, seek the lost. Be so merciful that you be not too remiss; so minister discipline that you forget not mercy."

That it may please Thee to strengthen such as do stand; and to comfort and help the weak-hearted; and to raise up those who fall; and finally to beat down Satan under our feet;

We beseech Thee to hear us, good Lord.

After suffrages for various classes of persons according to their spiritual needs, follow several for various classes according to their temporal necessities. Here too we may remind ourselves of the story of our Lord's earthly ministry preserved to us in the Gospels, how He went about doing good, and healing all that were sick of divers diseases; He was moved with compassion for the hungry crowd, and for be-

THE LITANY

reaved friends; He calmed the fears of the disciples in the tempest."⁵⁷ It is to Him we pray "to succour, help, and comfort, all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation."

One of the early liturgies (or services for the celebration of the Holy Communion) that are preserved to us, after detailed intercessions for all sorts and conditions of men, prays—

Sail with the voyagers,
travel with the way-farers,
champion widows, shield orphans,
deliver captives,
heal the sick.

For Thou, O Lord, art the succour of the succourless,

and the hope of them that are past hope,
the saviour of the tempest-tossed,
the harbour of the voyagers,
the physician of the sick:

Thyself become all things to all men,
which knowest each one and his petition, each house and its need.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Acts x. 38; Matt. iv. 23; Mark viii. 2; Luke vii. 13; Mark iv. 37-40.

⁵⁸ Liturgy of St. Basil. See *Translations of the Primitive Liturgies*, by Neale & Littledale, pp. 139, 140. Incorporated by Bishop Andrewes in his Devotions for Wednesday morning.

AN EXPOSITION OF

(a) In these petitions we are dwelling on evil under the aspect of misfortune. "That the world is full of this, the most casual observer must confess; how full it is they only who from circumstances have been let to penetrate the crust of the world's civilization can attest. Under the present civilization of the world and the false surface of the things we see, what a depth of wretchedness exists! Hunger and thirst, disease and poverty, shame and slavery, mental anguish and blighted prospects, disappointed ambition and unrequited love, corrupted infancy and neglected old age, are some of the inmates of the wards of the great lazar-house of life." *

(b) Then we go on to more specific instances of danger and need. "That it may please Thee to preserve all who travel by land or by water, all women in the perils of child-birth, all sick persons, and young children; and to show Thy pity

* Bishop A. P. Forbes of Brechin, *Commentary on the Litany*, p. 147.

THE LITANY

upon all prisoners and captives." If journeys are largely, by no means wholly, freed from the peculiar dangers which attended them in earlier times (pirates have mostly disappeared from the seas, but 'hold-ups' are not uncommon on Western railroads), modern travel by land and by water has its own dangers, by reason of the size and weight of its conveyances, and the speed with which they are propelled. Terrible disasters are fresh in our memories. Such perils call for prayer for divine protection for those who travel by land or by water. When travelling by *air* becomes a recognized mode of transit, and not a hazardous experiment—rash or brave according to the spirit and intention with which it is undertaken,—it will be natural and proper to include this likewise in our prayers. With loving reverent thoughts of blessed Mary and her Child the Christian Church has ever paid honour to motherhood, and surrounded child-life with tokens of her respect and care. So we are taught to pray for all women in the perils of child-bearing, and for young children. The prac-

AN EXPOSITION OF

tical revival of the Churching office would be one way in which to witness to the sacredness of motherhood, as nothing to be ashamed of, but a dignity for which to thank God, asking at the same time His aid in fulfilling the responsibilities which it involves.

The sick in general claim a share in our prayers, (1) that if it be God's will, they may be restored to health, (2) that in any case their affliction may be hallowed to them. Both these thoughts belong to a sane and Christian view of sickness. Pain and suffering we regard as abstractedly contrary to God's will, a hostile invasion of His order. At the same time we are taught, by observation as by Scripture, to recognize the use He makes of them for purifying and refining the life and character of men and women. Accordingly we are bound to do what we can to alleviate suffering and restore health, praying the while that, so far and so long as the suffering is allowed by God, it may serve His purposes and promote the sufferer's high-

THE LITANY

est welfare." Hospitals were in their origin a distinctly Christian institution." Certainly in our day the healing art is held in high honour by the Christian Church, with its devoted followers in the medical and nursing professions.

Visiting the sick and those in prison were among the works of mercy by which our Lord declared the nations would be tested at the Judgment."

Accordingly we pray Him to shew His pity upon all prisoners and captives. The two words we may understand as referring, "captives" to those in the hands of enemies, and "prisoners" to those suffering punishment for their crimes. For all we beg His pity, who was unjustly accused, cruelly mistreated, and put to a felon's death. Crucified between two robbers He

"I have discussed this question at some length in a booklet, *Pain and Suffering, their place in the world*. (Young Churchman Co., 1909.)

"See Dr. Liddon, *Sermons preached on special occasions*, p. 210.

"Matt. xxv. 36, 43.

AN EXPOSITION OF

won a companion in suffering to penitence and promised him a place with Him in Paradise." We would pray, and use all our influence, for the improvement of our gaols and prisons, that they may be so ordered as to become in truth houses of correction and reformation, wherein wrongdoers may be brought to a better mind, and whence, when discharged, they may start afresh on a new career of self-respect and usefulness.

(c) Next we turn to think of the bereaved, the desolate and oppressed. "That it may please Thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and all who are desolate and oppressed."

God has continually proclaimed Himself the Protector of the fatherless and the widow, warning of His righteous anger against such as oppress or defraud these in a condition of helplessness." These have ever been the objects of the Church's special solicitude. To St. John who,

" Luke xxiii. 39-43.

" Deut. x. 18; Ps. lxxii. 12.

THE LITANY

standing by his Master's cross, proved his worthiness for the trust, the Lord when dying commended the care of His bereaved Mother." The group and the incident stand in the Gospel as the example and sanction of the new relationships formed in the Christian Church, and in particular for charitable institutions wherein a home is provided for the orphan and the desolate.

After the enumeration of these varied groups of persons with their special needs, there comes the touching petition, "That it may please Thee to have mercy upon all men." To Jesus, the Son of man, we pray, the Pattern and Ideal of the human race, the representative not of one nation only, but of human kind; this He became through the taking of our nature by His pre-existing divine person. To Him we pray for all men, whatever the colour of their skin, the place of their abode, their tongue, their education or stage of civiliza-

" John xix. 26, 27.

AN EXPOSITION OF

tion, whatever their present moral condition. He deigns to call them brethren, even the least of them." They were created in God's image; they have been redeemed (potentially) by the precious blood of the incarnate Son, the Holy Spirit would make them temples of His indwelling presence. With this design and these capacities all men have a claim on our respect, our prayers, our aid." To join in this petition of the Litany, and then to declare oneself uninterested in foreign—or any—missions is a curious inconsistency. We are bound to do all in our power to help all men to become true men; their temporal needs relieved, but raised above the mere life of the flesh, with their deeper longings also satisfied, the mind enlightened, the heart purified, the conscience trained in the knowledge and love of God made known in Jesus Christ. "Thou hast given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as Thou

" Heb. ii. 11; Matt. xxv. 40.

" I Peter ii. 17.

THE LITANY

hast given Him. And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent.”[“]

We may well pray in the words of the great missionary, St. Francis Xavier:

O God of all the nations of the earth, remember the multitudes of the heathen, who, though created in Thine image, are perishing in their ignorance, and according to the propitiation of Thy Son Jesus Christ, grant that by the prayers and labours of Thy holy Church they may be delivered from all superstition and unbelief, and brought to worship Thee, through Him whom Thou hast sent to be our Salvation, the Resurrection and the Life of all the faithful, the same Thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord.

From our Litany we sadly miss a petition, which always found a place in older forms of intercession, for the departed—those near and dear to us, and others too

[“] John xvii. 2, 3.

AN EXPOSITION OF

who have departed this world.* They have not gone beyond the reach or the need of our Lord's care. To Him we would commend them, as Stephen commended his own departing spirit to the Lord who had Himself passed that way before;† beseeching Him to do His utmost for their souls' true weal, cleansing, enlightening, restoring,

* In an appendix to the *Translations of the Primitive Liturgies* Dr. Neale gives a collection of intercessions for the faithful departed from a number of early liturgies beside those which are translated at length in the book. He says, "The more they are examined, the more clearly two points will appear. 1. That prayers for the dead, and more especially the oblation of the blessed Eucharist for them, have been from the beginning the practice of the Universal Church. 2. And this without any idea of a purgatory of pain, or of any state from which the departed soul has to be delivered as from one of misery." It might be added that in nearly all there is a pleading for mercy and forgiveness, such as the following: "Blot out, forgive, and remit all their sins, known and unknown, voluntary and involuntary; for none hath appeared upon earth without sin, excepting Thy only-begotten Son, our Lord God and Saviour Jesus Christ, by Whom also we desire to obtain mercy and the remission of sins which is for His sake, both for them and for ourselves."

† Acts vii. 59; Luke xxiii. 46.

THE LITANY

quickenings, and preparing them for perfect service in perfect life.

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
And let light perpetual shine upon them."

The Lord grant unto them, that they may
find mercy of the Lord in that day."

"This prayer or anthem (founded on the Vulgate of II [IV] Esdras ii. 34, 35) from its first word gives the name *Requiem* to the Latin Service for the dead. Its use in this connection is probably earlier than A. D. 600.

"II Tim. i. 18.

AT the end of the Supplications three more detached petitions follow, for enemies, for the fruits of the earth, for true repentance.

(a) "That it may please Thee to forgive our enemies, persecutors, and slanderers, and to turn their hearts."

The forgiveness of injuries is a law of the Christian religion. God loved men when dead in sins and alienated from Him, and sought to reconcile us to Himself.¹³ It was man, not God (mark you), whose attitude needed to be changed. Jesus prayed on the cross for those who murdered Him, excusing their wrong, pleading their ignorance of what they did.¹⁴ He commands His disciples, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute

¹³ Eph. ii. 4.

¹⁴ Luke xxiii. 34.

AN EXPOSITION OF

you." " If this is how we should requite persecution for our religion's sake, how much more are we bound to pardon trivial or petty slights and misunderstandings! Reconciliation, of course, requires the action of both parties. We cannot make friends with one who persistently stands aloof or adheres to a hostile attitude. God requires repentance on our part as a condition for His forgiveness." But we must not lay down impossible terms for reconciliation, but must shew ourselves in a readiness to meet those who have been estranged. One of the best ways to overcome unkindly and resentful feelings is to pray for those who have caused them. So we learn to look at persons from God's point of view, and not merely as they come up against us. And we should always remember that whatever injury any may do to us, they do themselves a far greater hurt. They may injure our property, our person, our name; but it is their own moral

" Matt. v. 44.

" Ezek. xxxiii. 11, 14-16; Luke xvii. 3, 4.

THE LITANY

character they hurt, and that in us they cannot reach, save by our yielding to temptation—or provocation. Accordingly we pray for their conversion to a better mind, that together as fellow penitents we and they may find mercy and forgiveness of our common Lord.

(b) "That it may please Thee to give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth, so that in due time we may enjoy them."

We may be reminded in this petition of two phrases in the Nicene Creed, or of two great truths therein expressed. (1) We profess our belief in God as the Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible as well as invisible; (2) and we declare that the good Lord, Jesus Christ, to whom we pray in the Litany, was, as the Word of God, the Father's Agent through whom all things were made." Our religion must not get away from earth. The religion of the Incarnation is that which comes down to earth, bringing God into

" John i. 3.

AN EXPOSITION OF

our very midst. Accordingly as we are taught by Jesus to ask our heavenly Father for our daily bread, it is fitting to pray to our Lord to give and preserve to our use the kindly (that is the natural) fruits of the earth."

The older observance of the Rogation Days imploring God's blessing on the

"Compare the following prayer (saturated with Scriptural language) from the Liturgy of St. Mark (for use in the Church at Alexandria—with its reference to the Nile): "Send down richly good showers on the places that need them and desire them; rejoice and renew by their descent the face of the earth that in their drops it may be made glad, and may spring up. Raise up the waters of the river to their full measure; rejoice and renew by their ascent the face of the earth; water her furrows, multiply her increase. Bless, O Lord, the fruits of the earth. Preserve them continually whole and unhurt; preserve them to us for seed and for harvest. Bless also now, O Lord, the crown of the year of Thy goodness, for the poor of Thy people, for the widow, the orphan and the stranger, for all of us who hope in Thee, and who are called by Thy holy Name: for the eyes of all wait upon Thee, and Thou givest them their meat in due season. Thou that givest meat to all flesh, fill our hearts with joy and gladness, that we always, having all sufficiency in all things, may abound unto every good work in Christ Jesus our Lord."

THE LITANY

fields, and our more recent institution of Thanksgiving Day "for the fruits of the earth, and all the other blessings of God's merciful Providence," both alike are valuable as witnessing to our recognition of God's hand in what may be called temporal and worldly concerns.

Sunshine and rain, freedom from unseasonable weather and violent storms are needed along with man's diligent care and labour to produce good harvests. As we have before considered, to ask for God's blessing does not exclude our exertions (which we ask Him to bless and prosper); one way in which God may give and preserve to our use the kindly fruits of the earth is in teaching us to employ the best methods of agriculture, those best suited to our conditions, learning the laws which He has impressed on nature, and calling forth the forces He has stored up therein.

(c) The last suffrage is for true repentance—for ourselves and all—that on our hearty sorrow, and humble confession, with a firm purpose of amendment (these are the three elements of a true repent-

AN EXPOSITION OF

ance, and all are the result of God's grace) our Lord would mercifully forgive us our sins (the faults of more wilful commission), our negligences (the less deliberate failures), and our ignorances. Oftentimes our ignorance has been sinful, for we ought to have known, had we not been blinded through sloth or selfishness, through pride or worldliness; we should have known had we kept our conscience true and pure. This with reference to the past. For the future we beg for the *power* of the Holy Spirit to amend and rule our lives according to the true *standard* of God's holy Word. This, we may remember, is always the relation of God's Word, whether personal or impersonal, and His Spirit. The Word gives us the standard or rule, the Spirit enables us to correspond therewith.

Here are concluded the supplications of the Litany, or General Supplication as it is rightly called. Our hearts ought to be expanded as we join in these wide-reach-

THE LITANY

ing intercessions, which may well form a model also for our own private prayers. They follow the hint of the Lord's Prayer, where all is said in the plural, "*Our* Father, give *us* . . . deliver *us*," teaching us to ask for others what we desire for ourselves, to share with others what we value for ourselves, to do all in our power to ward off from others what we dread for ourselves and for those specially near and dear to us.

In the Litany, as in the Prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church in the Eucharistic office, we should learn to apply and refer the general petitions to particular persons and needs with which we are ourselves familiar, to bring the particular case, so to speak, under the general prayer. A more common practice of asking the prayers of the congregation for particular cases would help to this, and the mention of *names* would lead to emphasize the family feeling which should be cherished in the Christian Church. The use of *special* prayers for the sick, or the afflicted, or for travellers, when they have

AN EXPOSITION OF

just been prayed for in the general intercession, is a mistake; it seems to imply that the general prayer does not really count for anything. We should learn to say the general prayers with special intention and application.

The Supplications ended, they are followed by passionate entreaties to our Lord, as the Son of God, to hear us, and as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world, to have mercy upon us, and to grant us His peace. We may pause on the prayer of the *Agnus Dei*, which is repeated in the *Gloria in excelsis* at the Eucharist. We appeal to our Lord as He was pointed out by St. John the Forerunner, as the antetype of the sacrificial victims under the old law."

He is the Lamb of God, the victim whom God both provides and accepts."

As over the head of the animal were confessed the sins of those for whom the sacrifice was offered," so He takes upon Him-

⁷⁹ John i. 29.

⁸⁰ Gen. xxii, 8.

⁸¹ Levit. xvi. 21.

THE LITANY

self as the representative of the race the burden and ~~shame~~ of our misdoings, and bears our sins in His ~~own~~ body to the cross, humbling Himself before God on their account and fighting out our battle."²² Thus He makes reparation for our offences, and reverses the stream of human life, and communicates from Himself to all who will receive it a new life of holiness and obedience, of truth and purity and love. Thus does the Lamb of God continually take away the sins of the world. Thus does He shew us mercy and grant us peace—*His* peace of reconciliation with God, of harmony with ourselves, and so of concord with our brethren.

Then succeed the short earnest cries, Lord have mercy upon us, Christ have mercy upon us, which were a prominent feature in all ancient litanies. These may be understood either as a return to the invocation of each person of the Trinity with which the Litany began, or (which was probably their earlier meaning) as

²² Isa. liii. 4, etc.; I Pet. ii. 24; II Cor. v. 21; Col. ii. 13-15; Eph. i. 3-14, ii. 13-18.

AN EXPOSITION OF

all addressed to Jesus under the different titles of "Lord" and "Christ."

The petitions are then all gathered up in the Lord's Prayer, and the ordinary rule of prayer is resumed, in accordance with which it is addressed to the Father, through the mediation and under the leadership of the incarnate Son, with the aid of the Holy Spirit.

When according to the permission of the American Prayer Book the intermediate portion is omitted, if the Litany is said (as is not infrequently the case) as a separate service, it should be continued so as to include the Lord's Prayer, without which no service should be regarded as complete. And when the Litany is said as an introduction to the Holy Communion, it might end, as is prescribed at Ordinations, with the prayer, "We humbly beseech Thee, O Father," omitting the concluding Prayer of St. Chrysostom and the Grace.

When the earlier part of the Litany was sung (this of course would only be in large churches or out of doors), the prayers that

THE LITANY

follow from the "Our Father" were said kneeling before the altar or at the entrance to the chancel.

The prayer, "O God, merciful Father," was the collect in the Mass provided in the Sarum book "for one in tribulation of heart."

The suffrages "O Lord, arise and help us," etc. (from the beginning and end of Psalm xliv), with the following Versicles and Responses, are taken from a special intercession for use in time of war, but are fitting at any season to express the needs of all Christians, called to a perpetual warfare in Christ's name against sin, the world, and the Devil."

"It is worth noticing that these prayers have got into a curiously confused order. (1) There should be an *Amen* at the end of the prayer "O God, merciful Father," as at the end of other prayers. (2) The sentence "O Lord, arise and help" is not a response to the preceding prayer, but belongs to what follows. It is an antiphon to the Psalm represented by one verse, "We have heard with our ears," etc. (3) The *Gloria Patri* should come in *before* the repetition of the antiphon after the Psalm.

AN EXPOSITION OF

The Prayer of St. Chrysostom is not found among the writings of the Saint (A. D. 407), but it occurs in later copies (probably belonging to the ninth century) of the liturgy of the Church of Constantinople which bears his name, near the beginning of the service for Holy Communion. It had no place in Western service-books, but was introduced into the English Litany by Archbishop Cranmer in 1544.

The prayer, which is addressed to our Lord Jesus Christ, is based on His promise, "If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven; for where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." "The efficacy of united prayer consists not in pressure brought to bear by a multitude of suppliants, but in the elimination of merely selfish desires as we associate ourselves with others, and others with ourselves, in our petitions, seeking the common welfare.

"Matt. xviii. 19, 20.

THE LITANY

The "two or three" represent the body of the faithful united with one another under the headship of the common Lord.

The petitions on which, so to speak, we insist (comp. Ps. xxvii. 4) after having poured out all our desires before our Lord, are those which we are sure are according to His will and such as He desires for us—in this world knowledge of His will, and in the world to come life everlasting.* Other blessings (as we regard them) we leave with Him to bestow or to withhold as He sees best. So the Litany ends, and our instructions thereon, with a reminder about the true doctrine of Christian prayer; it is not to bend God's will to ours, but to lift our wills to God.* The benediction or "Grace" with which the service concludes is taken from the end of St. Paul's second epistle to the Corinthians. This is one of the earliest of the apostolic

* I John v. 14.

* I may refer for a fuller treatment of various questions touched on in these instructions to my Bohlen Lectures on *The Christian Doctrine of Prayer*.

AN EXPOSITION OF

writings, of much earlier date than the end of St. Matthew's Gospel, with the commission to baptize into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost—written indeed not more than twenty-six, or at the most twenty-eight, years after the Ascension, and so bearing witness to the common belief of the earliest Christians concerning the Trinity." Here is (1) a clear association of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit with God as the object of worship and the source of blessing;" and (2) an equally plain recognition of personal existence on the part of God, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The incarnate Son is mentioned first, probably because by reason of His having taken our nature He is thought of as standing nearest to us; His grace (which in-

"Sanday in Hastings's Dictionary of the Bible, vol. II. p. 213, art. "God."

"See St. Athanasius, Discourse III *Against the Arians*, ch. xxv. 12, "No one would pray to receive from God and the Angels, or from any other creature, nor would any one say, 'May God and the Angel give thee'; but from the Father and the Son, because of their oneness and the oneness of their giving" (Nicene Fathers, vol. iv, p. 400).

THE LITANY

cludes both favour and help) introduces us to the love of God the Father ("No man cometh unto the Father but through Me" ⁸⁸) while the communion or fellowship—the companionship—of the Holy Ghost tells us that God is not to be thought of as an absent being in a distant heaven, or as manifesting Himself only nineteen centuries ago, but as coming now to dwell within us by His Spirit, making us partakers of the divine nature,⁸⁹ communicating to us God's truth and love and purity, our constant Helper and Guide amid the duties and business and pleasures of our daily life, to which we go forth from our worship and supplications in the sanctuary.

⁸⁸ John xiv. 6.

⁸⁹ II Pet. i. 4.

NOTE ON INTERNATIONAL PEACE

Pp. 43 and 70

Especially at this time it may be helpful to recall the following noble statement of principles from a paper entitled "A Christian Policy of Peace," put forth in 1889 by Bishop Westcott (then a Canon of Westminster) in his capacity as Chairman of the Provisional Committee of the Christian union for Promoting International Concord.

"While armaments are everywhere growing, a conviction is also rapidly gaining ground that material force cannot determine right or establish lasting peace. Above all, it is more and more clearly acknowledged that the attitude of great nations one towards another is inconsistent with the spirit of the Christian Faith.

"Hitherto, it must be confessed, the lessons of the Gospel have not been applied to the problems of international life. Dur-

THE LITANY

ing the last three centuries attention has been directed mainly to questions of personal conduct. But the time seems to have now come when Christians as Christians are required to realise and give effect to their creed in the discharge of the widest social duties—the duties not only of class to class, but also of nation to nation—as members of one race. . . .

“Christianity rests upon the central fact that *the Word became flesh*. This fact establishes not only a brotherhood of men, but also a brotherhood of nations; for history has shown that nations are an element in the fulfilment of the Divine counsel, by which humanity advances towards its appointed end.

“This larger truth we have still to master. We have learnt in some degree that individual men gain and suffer together; that they are strong by sacrifice; that they are made for mutual service: we have not yet learnt that it is so with nations. It may not indeed be possible to see at once how the truth will be applied in particular cases. Action must be prepared by

AN EXPOSITION OF THE LITANY

thought and supported by a calm and strong public opinion. Meanwhile, however, in order that the opinion may be formed, we, as Christians, are bound to confess our faith in the truth, before God and before man, and the simple confession will not be in vain."

—*Life and Letters of Brooke Foss Westcott*, vol. ii, pp. 21, 22.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- The Work of the Holy Spirit.* Illustrated by New Testament Symbols. .90; by mail .96.
- Letters to my Godchildren in Explanation of the Church Catechism.* Paper, .25; by mail .30. Cloth, .40; by mail .46.
- Spiritual Instructions.* Paper, .40; by mail .43.
- Instructions and Devotions on the Holy Communion.* Paper, .12; by mail .13.
- Meditations on the Creed.* .50; by mail .55.
- Meditations on the Lord's Prayer.* .50; by mail .55.
- The Example of the Passion.* Five Meditations. .35; by mail .38.
- Some Hints for Lent.* 2.00 per hundred.
- The Words from and to the Cross.* Meditations for Holy Week and Good Friday. .60; by mail .65.
- The Sainly Life.* Notes and Hints for Meditation on the Epistle to the Philippians. .25; by mail .28.
- Concerning Christ and the Church.* Notes for Meditation on St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians. .20; by mail .23.
- Self-Discipline.* Six Addresses. Cloth, 60; by mail .65. Paper, .25; by mail .28.
- Reasonable Faith.* Four Sermons on Fundamental Christian Doctrines. .20; by mail .23.
- The Gospel Woes.* Lent Lectures. Cloth, .60; by mail .65. Paper, .25; by mail .28.
- Pain and Suffering: Their Place in the World.* Paper, .10; by mail .11.
- Christian Unity.* Paper, .10; by mail .11.

THE YOUNG CHURCHMAN CO.
Milwaukee, Wis.

The Doctrine of the Church. 1.25.

THE UNIVERSITY PRESS, SEWANEE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

- The Church's Discipline concerning Marriage and Divorce.* A charge, 1896. .25.
Marriage with Relatives. A charge, 1901. .25.
Ecclesiastical Discipline. A charge, 1904. .25.
The Eucharist. A charge, 1907. .25.
The Apostolic Ministry. A charge, 1910. .25.
Christ's Temptation and Ours. The Baldwin Lectures, 1896. 1.00.
The Use of Holy Scripture in the Worship of the Church. The Paddock Lectures, 1903. Net, 1.40.
The Christian Doctrine of Prayer. The Bohlen Lectures, 1904. Net, 1.00.
The Relations of Faith and Life. The Bedell Lectures, 1905. Net, 1.00.
The Example of Our Lord, especially for His Ministers. Net, .90.
Confirmation. In the Oxford Library of Practical Theology. Net, 1.40.
The Forgiveness of Sins. Sermons. Net, 1.00.
The Virgin Mother. Addresses on the Life of the Blessed Virgin Mary as told in the Gospels. With an Appended Essay on the Virgin Birth of Our Lord Jesus Christ. 1.25.
The Sevenfold Unity of the Christian Church. Net, .75.
Preaching and Pastoral Care. 1.00.

LONGMANS, GREEN & CO.
New York

- A Companion to the Prayer Book.* A Liturgical and Spiritual Exposition of the Services for the Holy Communion, Morning and Evening Prayer, and the Litany. .35.

THOMAS NELSON & SONS
New York

- Facts Affirmed by the Creed.* 8vo. Net, .10. 1906.

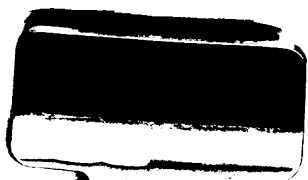
E. S. GORHAM
New York

This book may be kept

89097200927



B89097200927A



89097200927



b89097200927a